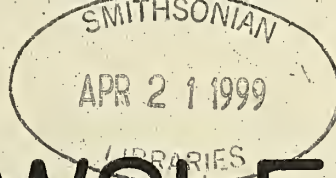


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CBC NEWSLETTER

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 45

March/April 1999

Number 2

Why Charlotte? Why Not?

What do you think of when someone mentions Charlotte? Banks, sprawl, congestion, concrete and tall buildings? Well the Charlotte metropolitan area certainly has all that but it has a lot more. When a bird looks at this area she sees rivers, lakes, tall, lush deciduous trees, open fields, wetlands and even a prairie or two. She sees it as a place to rest on her long journey up river to the mountains or as a home where she can raise her young successfully.

Although there are a lot of people in the Metrolina area (Charlotte, Gastonia and Rock Hill equal nearly a million) there are still a lot of places for birds and wildlife.

- The area has nearly 30 miles of greenway which are predominately along flood plains which provide excellent habitat for resident, migrant and wintering species.

- Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation has established three nature preserves. Within two of those preserves are projects attempting to restore some piedmont prairie ecosystems for the endangered Schweinitz's sunflower (*Helianthus schweinitzii*).

- Mountain Island Lake Coalition is working hard at preserving the watershed through the purchase of land. Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge owned by Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation is the cornerstone of this effort but additional land has been purchased in Gaston and Lincoln counties.

- Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge and the surrounding Mountain Island Lake area will be designated an Important Bird Area.

- Catawba Land Conservancy protects several important habitats in the

area.

- Thanks to the airport a lot of the land along Lake Wylie is not being developed and remains rather rural for its location. All these efforts help to make the Metrolina area a haven for birds and wildlife within a very urban environment.

So to answer that unvoiced question – yes, there really are a lot of birds and places to bird in the Charlotte area. There is a long and proud history of birding in the Charlotte area. It has one of the oldest Christmas counts in the state with nearly 60 years of data. The official tally of species seen and documented in the county is 284 with several additional species seen in neighboring counties. But time has brought many changes to this piedmont area and that will be the theme of the Friday night meeting. **David Wright** has been birding in this area since he was a child. With his father, also an avid birder, David has wondered all over the county discovering many avian treasures along its streams and hedgerows. Currently living on Lake Norman he keeps vigilant watch over the comings and goings of birds on the lake. Some of his more recent discoveries have included a Franklin's gull on the Christmas Count and a Parasitic Jaeger this past fall while wining and dining some new business acquaintances. David will share with us some of the past glories of the area as well as talk about how development has impacted the area for both good and ill. Since David is fond of taking video this will probably be a multimedia presentation.

There has been a slight change in the Saturday evening program. We will still investigate the effect of urban sprawl. But instead of a range of species we will focus

on one, the Barn Owl. **Marek Smith**, Environmental Education Specialist for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, will share with us data from his Master's thesis about the status of Barn Owls in the Metrolina area. As part of his study he had to identify local breeding pairs in order to monitor the success rate of their offspring. He then compared their success rate to those young birds which were orphaned and released by the Carolina Raptor Center. In the process of his study Marek has gathered a lot of information about the status of Barn Owls in this area. Randall, a surrogate Barn Owl father, may join us if he can get away from the nest.

So that's why Charlotte. Besides I am sure many of you have found yourselves in the Charlotte area and wondered where you could go to get in a little birding. Well here is your opportunity to discover our birding secrets.

Details:

Date: April 23-25, 1999

Place: Woodlawn Holiday Inn located at Woodlawn and I-77 (Exit 6A). This is an older "Holidome" type hotel with a lovely indoor pool and patio area as well as a nice conference area where we will be holding our gatherings.

Reservations: Rooms are \$74.00 plus 12% tax. Reservations should be made by **April 8** to guarantee this rate. The number for making reservations is 1-800-847-7829 or 704-525-8350.

Amenities: There are a number of very good restaurants within in walking distance. One of the best Mexican restaurants is right across the street.

CBC Newsletter

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CBC Rare Bird Alert

(704) 332-BIRD

The Carolina Coast in Winter



Jon Dunn makes point with Jean & Bill Hough of Pisgah Forest, NC

This year's winter CBC meeting at Nag's Head, Jan. 29-31, gets a consensus five star rating. A bird list of 177 species was tallied by 227 registrants. The occasion had something for everyone.

If it's numbers you like, there were the 30,000+ Snow Geese seen on Friday's visit to Pungo NWR. If rarities are your game, the trip lived up to the forecast in the Newsletter. Undoubtedly, the "best birds" were the two Atlantic Puffins seen on the pelagic trip, where Manx Shearwaters were icing on the cake. Then there was the Rough-legged Hawk seen at the Alligator River NWR by groups on Friday and Sunday. Unfortunately, the bird took a day off and was not seen on Saturday. The male Eurasian Wigeon, which spent the weekend playing hide-and-seek in the marsh just a stone's throw from the Pea Island Visitors' Center, was finally seen by nearly everyone.

Our speakers at the evening meeting were on a par with the quality of the birding. "Our own" John Fussell's Friday evening talk, based on a lifetime of experience and an amazing memory, left us with a ton of helpful details regarding the relationship between coastal bird finding and the weather and tides. Jon Dunn proved to be as personable as he was knowledgeable. His Friday evening presentation on identification of *Empidonax* flycatchers and Saturday evening's talk on sparrow identification were information-packed and beautifully illustrated.

Not to be overlooked was Lynn Barber's report on her spur-of-the-moment investigation of the origin of the Black-bellied Whistling Duck that is wintering at Wanchese. She graciously accepted the role of kill-joy. Sorry folks, you need to scratch that one off your NC list.

Finally the kudos (and, as usual, someone will probably be missed). John and Libba Watson, as always, generously donated their time and ability to the task of registration--largely while the rest of us were birding. Gail Lankford and Lynn Barber spent almost as many hours with book and T-shirt sales. Pat Moore and other members of the Cape Hatteras Bird Club not only brought refreshments but also provided 4-wheel drive vehicles, without which the trips to Cape Point would not have been possible. Not to be overlooked is the help we received from Bonnie Strawser, Kim King-Wrenn and volunteers from the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society. Credit is also due the Comfort Inn personnel. They proved to be helpful and pleasant. Finally, the cornerstone of any successful CBC meeting is the field trip leadership. And we had the best. The way these individuals patiently share their time and knowledge is truly remarkable. It would be difficult to single out any one of them for the prize in this group, but particularly noteworthy was the way Derb Carter shared his vehicle as well as his knowledge in spending the day shuttling people to Cape Point.

March 5, 1999. Surprisingly, January and February have been good backyard birding months for us. As I look through my journal, I see that I have commented often about two birds being on the suet. I suppose that's from watching hummers in the summer--rarely do two hummers drink from the same feeder at the same time. That doesn't hold true with birds and suet. We often see two Brown-headed Nuthatches on either side of the suet, but what surprises me is when I look out and see a Downy Woodpecker on one side and a Tufted Titmouse on the other, or the woodpecker and a Pine Warbler, or a Carolina Wren and a titmouse. These are not the only suet eaters though. We bought some suet that has pineapple in it and some that is especially for woodpeckers. For the first time in all of our bird feeding years we have had an immature Yellow-bellied Sapsucker visiting the woodpecker suet several times a day, and he shares with no one. When he flies in, the other birds take off. We first saw him February 23 and have watched the top of his head go from yellowish, blackish brown to faintly red. Yesterday, the red was brighter and even more noticeable.

Another first for us at a feeder is a Yellow-rumped Warbler. Two or three of these pretty little birds came for the pineapple suet, but they have to fight the Pine Warblers for a spot. Those two different warblers, along with the thirty or more goldfinches ranging in color from pale greenish yellow to patchy bright yellow, add much needed color to our winter yard. We have also had two Purple Finch females at the sunflower feeder, but

Backyard Birding

with Frances J. Nelson

it was not until yesterday that male added his color to the yellows of the other birds.

Karen Hyder has a problem with grackles at her feeder. On the weekends, she stands guard at her back door and yells the grackles away, but when she is at work, the grackles own the feeder. Any ideas how to discourage them?

I also received a letter from **Judy Ayers**. She and her dog Megan were walking in the woods behind their house when a woodcock plopped down right in front of them. Judy, at first, thought someone had thrown something at them. The dog, the bird, and the person stared at one another for a time, and the bird gave a distress cry and flew off. It was Judy's first woodcock and probably Megan's too. Megan did meet a pair of Rufous-sided Towhees in a brush pile, but the birds pretty much ignored the dog.

The Ayers also have a pair of bluebirds staking claim to their bluebird box. one of them sits on the top of the post every morning just as the sun hits the box. That's got to be the male showing off his brilliant blue to a prospective mate.

My last letter came from **Kenneth and Katie Blaylock** who moved from Dallas, TX to Clayton, NC, about nine months ago. Their most common bird in Dallas was a House Sparrow, but on their 4.5 acres of woodland, they have had much more

excitement: White-throated, Song, Field and Chipping Sparrows; juncos; cardinals; mockingbirds; Blue Jays; Brown Thrashers; Hermit Thrush; robins; chickadees; titmice; Carolina and Winter Wrens; bluebirds; Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets; doves; Downy, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers; sapsuckers; flickers; Pine Warblers; phoebes; Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and Sharp-Shinned Hawks; crows; and a Great Blue Heron. They have heard Screech and Great-horned Owls. Sounds like a wonderful start to a yard list.

Kenneth also writes that one day a Red-shouldered Hawk landed on the railing of their back deck, flew down to the ground, caught a small lizard, munched it down in one gulp and flew away before he could get his camera. he also noticed, during the first week of February, two Red-shouldered Hawks doing their display flights of diving and side-slipping. One is building a nest about 75 yards from the Blaylock house. He wonders if it is time for the hawks to be mating.

It must be, because CJ saw two Red-shouldered mating in our back yard (we do have a few trees), and CJ has seen the hawks frequently, but they seem to appear only when I'm at work.

I think I may have misplaced an e-mail. If you sent me some information, and I neglected to mention it in this column, please resend.

Thanks to those of you who shared your backyards with the rest of us. I can always use stories about your birds. My address is still 2061 Ferbow Street, Creedmoor, NC 27522; phone (919) 528-1156 and e-mail is fnelson@wpo.nccu.edu.

More New Members

Ron Silverman
Raleigh, NC

Gerald & Betty Stanford
Lenoir, NC

Richard & Lisa Stephensen
Collettsville, NC

Nancy Stokes & Juliann Bolton, Columbus, NC

Roger Timberlake
Charlotte, NC

Jerry Trivette
Clyde, NC

Greg & Leslie Turnage
Tryon, NC

Charles L. Varner
Gastonia, NC

John & Pam Vining
Tryon, NC

Jennifer & Jeremy Wainwright, Tryon, NC

Margaret Waterfield
Knots Island, NC

Christopher & Merci Weitzen, Saluda, NC

David Williams
Smithfield, NC

Kenneth & Patsy Williams
Mill Spring, NC

Frank Witebsky
Silver Springs, MD

Ben Wolters
Landrum, SC

Mary & Roger Wolters
Landrum, SC

John & Kate Worm
Hickory, NC

Life Members

Buddy & Ann Garrett
Jacksonville, NC

J. C. Raymond
Hampton, SC

Field Trip Schedule

CBC Winter Meeting, Charlotte, NC

April 23-25, 1999

Trip

Name of Trip

Friday, April 23

Half-day trips - 12 noon to 4:00 p.m.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | Ann Springs Close Greenway |
| 2 | Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge |
| 3 | Pee Dee NWR |
| 4 | Wing Haven/Latta Park |

Saturday, April 24

All-day trips - 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 | Ann Springs Close Greenway |
| 6 | Mountain Island Lake Area: Steam Plant/Lake Norman/Cowan's Ford |
| 7 | Pee Dee NWR |
| 8 | University City Area |

Trip

Name of Trip

Saturday, April 24 (continued)

Half-day Morning - 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

- | | |
|----|---|
| 9 | Allen Steam Plant (Gaston County) |
| 10 | CLC Wildflower Glen |
| 11 | Latta Plantation Nature Preserve: Raptor Center |
| 12 | McAlpine Greenway/Boyce Park |
| 13 | RibbonWalk Botanical Forest |
| 14 | Wing Haven/Latta Park |

Half-day Afternoon - 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 15 | Allen Steam Plant (Gaston County) |
| 16 | Catawba Land Conservancy Wildflower Glen |
| 17 | Latta Plantation Nature Preserve: Raptor Center |
| 18 | McAlpine Greenway/Boyce Park |
| 19 | RibbonWalk Botanical Forest |
| 20 | Wing Haven/Latta Park |

Spring Meeting Field Trip Descriptions

When choosing field trips we tried to choose destinations which would provide good birding and also demonstrate the diversity of birding available in an urban environment. Since this is a spring weekend we also tried to include areas where wildflowers and butterflies might also be in abundance. Thus when the birds take their midday siestas as they will do, there will be other flora and fauna to capture your attention.

Since it is a little difficult to get around quickly in a large metropolitan area, if you are planning on doing 1/2 day trips you might want to consider the following combinations. These are not in any particular order.

Allen Steam Plant & CLC Wildflower Glen

Allen Steam Plant & Latta Plantation

McAlpine Greenway & Wing Haven

McAlpine Greenway & RibbonWalk

Latta Plantation & CLC Wildflower Glen

RibbonWalk & Latta Plantation

RibbonWalk & Wing Haven

Allen Steam Plant: (Gaston Co.) (Saturday: 1/2 Day, #9 #15)

Owned by Duke Power, the steam plant sits on the South Fork River in Gaston County. Birders in Gaston have been working with Duke Power to formulate a bird list for the property. After a year of observations they have over 120+ species. The habitat is varied with mixed forest and fields. Of particular interest have been the spring sights of Anhinga. Because of its location along the river it is also good for neotropical migrants. Walking in the area will be moderately strenuous.

Ann Springs Close Greenway: (Friday, 1/2 day, #1; Saturday: Full Day, #5)

With over 2000 acres and 12 miles of walking trails, the Anne Springs Close Greenway in Ft. Mill, SC, has the potential of an excellent variety of spring migrants as well as water birds. The area includes the historic Nation Ford trail across Steele Creek and several historic sites. A wide variety of birds can be found in the greenway's wooded hillsides, open fields, old railway bed,

creek bottomland and 7 ponds. The largest of these ponds covers 25 acres; the other six range from 1 to 5 acres. The bird checklist for the area, compiled in 1995, identifies just 160 species -- including summer and scarlet tanagers, a number of ducks, 8 hawks, and 25 warbler species. The Greenway's naturalist has asked our aid in reporting species not previously included on the list. There is an entrance fee of \$2 per person. Bring a lunch for this all-day trip. There are no vending or restaurant facilities at the site. Although there are some rolling hills paths are clear and clean so walking will not be very strenuous.

Catawba Land Conservancy Wildflower Glen: (Saturday; Half Day; #10 #16)

The Catawba Wildflower Glen is a ten-acre diverse, compact old-growth Basic Mesic Forest and one-of-a-kind mix of rare, uncommon and common plant species. A spring and small creek which drains directly into the Catawba River bisects the property and makes it a self-contained mini-watershed. This feature,

together with changing topography and several rock outcroppings, separates the Glen into several distinct mini-ecosystems; hence, the remarkable and varied flora. There hasn't been a lot of birding done on this property so these trips will help add to the bird list which is being developed. Wildflowers should be abundant so when the birds settle down there will still be a lot of things to observe and try to identify. Because of the changing topography this is a moderately strenuous walk although the trails are well maintained.

Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge: (Friday: 1/2 day, #2)

Originally owned by Crescent Power and Light and maintained by Ducks Unlimited, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation purchased this property in the early 90's and has continued to maintain it as a wildlife refuge. As such, access by the public is generally limited to an observation stand and the road leading to it. However, we have permission to explore the far flung corners of this 1,000+ acre refuge. It sits on the banks of Mountain Island Lake and has many coves where ducks, osprey and an eagle like to hide out. The forest is primarily pine with some deciduous mixed in. There are several old growth field which has been good habitat for prairie warbler and other species which like rejuvenating clear cuts. There are two small ponds which attract shorebirds in both spring and fall. One spring we had all possible swallows - barn, bank, cliff, rough-wing, and tree sitting on wire together. Since the area is undeveloped trails can be uneven and walking moderately strenuous. Bush whacking is not recommended since there are poisonous snakes in the area. Friday's trip will stay on the refuge all afternoon. The refuge is part of the Mountain Island Lake trip (#6) on Saturday.

Latta Plantation Nature Preserve: Raptor Center/Prairie Restoration Project (Saturday: 1/2 day, #11 #17).

Not far down stream from Cowan's Ford on Mountain Island Lake is the Latta Plantation Nature Preserve. This area was part of an old working piedmont plantation. The plantation house has been restored and is used for educational purposes. The rest of the preserve is open to the public for horseback riding and hiking. Several areas in the preserve are very 'birdie' but of particular interest is the piedmont prairie restoration project area. Working with students and faculty at UNC Charlotte the county has undertaken a project to restore a prairie like ecosystem for the endangered Schweinitz's sunflower (*Helianthus schweinitzii*). After exploring this area of the preserve you will go to the Carolina Raptor Center which is also located in the preserve. The Center opened a large, eagle aviary last spring which now contains 7 bald and 2 golden eagles. Other birds of note at the center are saw-whet owls, Mississippi kites, and short-eared owls. It should be noted that some of the best passerine birding in the preserve is also around the Raptor Center. There is a fair amount of walking on this field trip but it is not very strenuous. Note there will also be a \$4 entrance fee for the Raptor Center unless of course you are already a member.

McAlpine Greenway/Boyce Park: (Saturday: 1/2 day #12 #18)

As part of Charlotte's extensive greenway system McAlpine Greenway has proven to be a very productive and important birding spot for the area. Predominantly a flood plain this greenway draws in a wide array of migrant warblers including

blue wings, golden wings and even a Wilson's or two albeit on very rare occasions only. The open often damp playing fields entice shorebirds down for a respite. The swampy area is home for green heron and wood ducks. Swallows in the area have included bank, tree, rough-wing and of course barn. Breeders include barred and great horned owls, blue grosbeaks, indigo buntings, and many more. The two parks are contiguous with each other so once we have arrived we will spend the entire time in the parks. Paths are wide and walking is not strenuous but you will be doing a lot of it!

Mountain Island Lake Area: Steam Plant/Lake Norman/Cowan's Ford (Saturday: Full day #6)

Compared to it's BIG brother (Lake Norman) upstream Mountain Island Lake is relatively undeveloped. As the main source of drinking water for Charlotte there are many efforts to keep it that way (undeveloped). There are several good birding spots around the lake. This trip will start in Gaston county at a Duke Power steam plant where you will check out settling ponds and fields of second growth. From there you will travel along Killian Rd. checking out some pine woodland and open fields. At the Lake Norman dam you get an opportunity to see nesting cliff swallows. After checking out the thermal ponds at McGuire Nuclear Plant you head for the Cowan's Ford Refuge for an afternoon of birding. The steam plant and Cowan's Ford will include some moderately strenuous walking. Even though Charlotte is an urban area you will need to pack a lunch since this area is relatively free of modern conveniences (i.e. fast food places).

Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge: (Friday: 1/2 day #3; Saturday: Full day #7)

Located in Anson County, six miles north of Wadesboro, NC on Highway 52, the refuge encompasses 8,443 acres of natural habitat, including wetlands, tall pine forests, and native bottom land hardwoods. In the winter its wetlands provide excellent habitat for wintering water fowl. Migrating songbirds find food and shelter here in the spring and fall. The Refuge is interlaced with 50 miles of trails and roads, including the Prothonotary Warbler and Bluebird trails where one can observe the nesting habits of these beautiful birds. Just about anything can show up at Pee Dee in the spring. In recent years gray cheeked thrush and swainson's warblers have been banded there. There was a singing swainson's warbler there last June. Bald eagles are seen regularly as are Mississippi kites. Red-shouldered hawks abound and if you are real lucky you might see the resident red-cockaded woodpecker but I would not count on it. The Friday half day trip will meet at the refuge headquarters on Rt. 52 at noon. From there we will carpool to other areas of the refuge. This is a wildlife refuge so there are little to no amenities (although bathrooms are under construction as this is being written) so remember to bring water and snacks (lunch on Saturday) you might want. Walking is not very strenuous unless you start bushing whacking through some fields.

RibbonWalk Botanical Forest: (Saturday: 1/2 day #13 #19)

RibbonWalk, Charlotte's Botanical Forest, is an extraordinary woodland property. It presents a rare opportunity to unite varied priorities toward the common goal of preserving and enhancing

an extraordinary forest in the heart of the city. Mature pines, native hardwoods, wandering streams, large ponds and a picturesque meadow cover Ribbon Walk's 137 acres. Charlotte's Botanical Forest is a showcase for indigenous plants including an extraordinary grove of old-age beech trees recently designated as a 'treasure tree grove' by the Charlotte Treasure Tree Committee. This facility was open to the public last summer. Last fall was the first time we were able to take a field trip onto the property. We were pleasantly surprised at the variety of natural habitat which exists here. Not having birded the area in the spring this will be a new experience for all involved. We don't know what treasures may be lurking in bushes but one of the first birds we had last fall was a Connecticut Warbler!. Walking in this pleasant environment is not strenuous.

University City Area: Mallard Creek Greenway/Van Landingham Glen/Reedy Creek Nature Preserve (Saturday: Full day #8)

Less than ten years ago this area was predominately farms. Rapid development has changed the landscape but there has been a conscious effort to preserve natural areas. The business park known as University Research Park has several miles of trails along the Mallard Creek Greenway which provides a good area to see migrating warblers. It has a few old growth fields which has a variety of wildflowers and butterflies. When things calm down at the greenway we will take a swing through the UNC Charlotte campus to check out the Van Landingham Glen a beautiful natural garden area maintained by the University. After lunch we will spend the afternoon exploring the Reedy Creek Nature Preserve. With nearly an 1,000 acres of mixed deciduous forest we will be looking for woodland birds. Packing a lunch for this trip is not necessary since there are numerous places to eat in the area. Walking at Mallard Creek Greenway is not strenuous but Reedy Creek can be moderately strenuous since there are some relatively steep hills and embankments.

Wing Haven/Latta Park: (Friday: 1/2 day #4; Saturday: 1/2 day #14 #20)

Latta Park is a truly urban park. It is a small, 10 acres at most, neighborhood park nestled in one of the older Charlotte communities. However, it is shaded by towering old trees and has a small stream running through it. These two characteristics seem to be a magnet for warblers and other neotropical migrants. On many spring days one can sit on the banks of the stream and watch a marvelous parade of birds come in for their morning baths. When things calm down at this park the group will mosey over to the birthplace of birding in Charlotte, Wing Haven. Created by Edward and Elizabeth Clarkson, Wing Haven is a 4-acre garden and bird sanctuary that combines formal gardens with wild woodlands. They garden organically in a backyard setting with pools, birdbaths, fountains and statuary. Its purpose is to maintain and develop a sanctuary for wild birds and animals for the education of the general public; to establish and maintain gardens and grounds for the benefit and enjoyment of the community, and to educate the public on horticultural and wildlife subjects. This is definitely a low-key field trip. There will be a minimal amount of walking but you will still be able to see a wide variety of bird species.

More New Members

Gerald & Gertrude Hopper
Chestnut Mtn, GA

Mark Hufford
Columbus, NC

Jayne Hughes
Tryon, NC

Robert & Rita Jackson
Tryon, NC

Chris & Eloise Johnson
Tryon, NC

Madelyn Dedmondt Jordon
Charlotte, NC

John & Elsie Kinard
Saluda, NC

Dorothy G. Kunze
Saluda, NC

Michael & Linda Leake
Tryon, NC

Jean-Claude Linossi
Etowah, NC

Bryan & Laura Lynch
Mill Spring, NC

Bruce Mack
Irmo, SC

Sidney Maddock
Buxton, NC

Charles & Rebecca Magee
Tryon, NC

Tony & Megan Martaglio
Mt. Gilead, NC

Suzanne & John Martin
Columbus, NC

Tracey McAbee
Durham, NC

Dorothy & C.W. McCall, Sr.
Tryon, NC

Fred & Lynda Melton
Columbus, NC

Carl P. Meroney
Columbus, NC

Virgil Miller
Fayetteville, NC

William R. & Arail Mitchell
Tryon, NC

Vaughn & Beth Morrison
Todd, NC

Gary & Kathryn Newkirk
Clemson, SC

Tim & Karen Nicholson
Mebane, NC

Deborah O'Donnell
Tryon, NC

Edward E. Ornsby & J. Randall Grobe
Columbus, NC

Carlann Osborn
Columbus, NC

Dean Pace & Elain Tadlock
Columbus, NC

Mark Pumphrey
Etowah, NC

Lucy Purkey
Saluda, NC

Ronald & Nancy Reid
San Diego, CA

Zora Rhodes
Lake Junaluska, NC

Jean Richter
Windsor, NC

Sarah Rogers
Chapel Hill, NC

Beula Scheffer
East Lansing, MI

Jack & Chris Sheridan
Brevard, NC

Michael & Orpha Shuford
Hickory, NC

R.L. Shuford & M.S. East
Columbus, NC

Meeting Registration Form
CBC Spring Meeting, April 23-25, 1999

Name(s) _____
(list each name for name tags)
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone (____) _____ (day) (____) _____ (evening) e-mail _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____ for _____ member registrations at \$10 each and _____ nonmember registrations at \$20 each. Registration at the meeting will be \$20 for members or nonmembers.

Field Trip Registration

In the form below please indicate by **Trip Number** your choice of field trips. If registering for more than one person write the first name with each choice.

Friday _____ _____	Saturday (morning or all-day) _____ _____	Saturday (afternoon) _____ _____
---------------------------------	--	---

Mail with check payable to **Carolina Bird Club, Inc.**, PO Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555

Motel Reservation Form
Carolina Bird Club Spring Meeting, April 23-25, 1999

Name(s) _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Room rate: \$74 plus 12% tax. Please reserve _____ room(s). Arival _____ Departure _____. My check for the first night's lodging is enclosed.

Mail with deposit to **Woodlawn Holiday Inn**, 212 Woodlawn Rd., Charlotte, NC 28217 or call 1-800-847-7829 or 704-525-8350.

Membership Application and Order Form

Name _____ Address _____
(If family membership, give name of each person included.)
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Tel.. () _____ () _____
(home) (business)
E-mail address _____

Enter/Renew Membership As Indicated:

Send Materials Indicated:

____ Individual (\$15)	____ Affiliate Club (\$20)	____ CBC Cloth arm patch \$2.00 ea.
____ Family (\$20)	____ Contributing (\$35)	____ CBC Decals (vinyl stick-on) \$2.00 ea., \$1.75 ea. in quantity
____ Student (\$10)	____ Patron (\$50)	____ Checklists 10/\$1.75, 25/\$5, 50/\$9.50, 75/\$12.75, 100/\$16
____ Library/Institution (\$15)	____ Life (\$250)	

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Quest for 500

by Eric Dean



I guess some people actually start the year with

a birding goal in mind, whether it be finding new lifers, or seeing a certain number of birds within a certain area. Mine last year was to begin with something other than a starling as my first bird. (It turned out to be a Blue Jay). So my goal for the year was accomplished early on, or so I thought. Christmas Day, 1998 found me standing on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, bundled against the wind and cold, scanning through flocks of ducks for King Eider. But I saw none. Why wasn't I back in Goldsboro enjoying the season? What had sent me packing 200 miles from home on this holiday? Celia, sitting patiently in the truck, was probably thinking the same thing, but she never said so. Instead, when I brought up the idea of coming here, she never hesitated. Why on earth? Well it was December 25, and my year-list total stood at 497, that's why. If I was going to see 500 birds this year, and I really needed to now, I had only this last long weekend of the year to do it. So after glassing all the ducks for a second time, I climbed back into the truck and frowned, "It doesn't look good". Friday was almost gone and I had added nothing new. Only two days left. What to do, what to do? How had we ever gotten to this point anyway?

In January 1998 we flew to Seattle, Washington. My friend Robert and I have met somewhere in the states during past winters and spent a few days birding together. With him in California now, it also gives us a chance to see each other. We decided that we would meet in the Pacific Northwest. It was a very good trip. Birding the ferries and areas around Puget Sound turned out to be very productive. I saw nine lifers, including the Xantus' Hummingbird north of Vancouver and a Brambling near Port Alberni on Vancouver Island. Our only miss was Gyrfalcon. But birds like Yellow-billed

Loon, Ancient Murrelet, Rock Sandpiper, Long-eared Owl, Harris' Sparrow and Sky Lark made up for that. It was also the beginnings of a very nice year-list. However we didn't give it much thought at the time.

In March I led a Carolina Bird Club trip to south Texas to see Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. We stayed at the El Canelo, which operates as a bed & breakfast in addition to being a working ranch. The owls nest in the courtyard of the hacienda there. Everyone enjoyed great looks at the bird. Nesting Barn Owls and White-tailed Hawks were an added treat. The only disappointment was the relatively puny (live) rattlesnakes that Ray had to show us this year. We also day-tripped to Santa Ana and Bentsen to score the White-throated and Clay-colored Robins, both lifers for me. We saw 143 species in two full days, getting most of the south Texas specialty birds in the process. Then during May I organized a group of my friends and we did Arizona. What a great trip! We aced just about every target bird on our list. I also got three new birds...Juniper Titmouse in the Chiricahuas, White-eared Hummingbird in Ramsey and Montezuma Quail on Ruby Road. We also saw becards, Spotted Owls and lots of trogons. 163 species in five days. It was on our return from Arizona that I realized I had already seen over 400 birds for the year. 500 would be a possibility. The thought entered my mind then that I should give it a try. There were still quite a few birds left that I could see right here in North Carolina. I would probably not have another chance to try this again any time soon. And Celia was game. So the hunt was on!

Robert got married in June. The wedding was just outside Yosemite and afforded the opportunity to add a few more western birds to my growing list. During the outdoor ceremony I added Dipper and Band-tailed Pigeon. Also watched Black Phoebe and Anna's Hummingbird during the vows. That evening we drove up into West Yosemite and found Flammulated Owl, the last remaining NA owl I needed to see. It was

our first try ever for this bird and I was amazed we found it so easily. Things were looking good!

I did my only pelagic of the year in early August with Brian Patteson. I had wanted to do his second weekend trip, but it filled before I could get on. So I reluctantly signed up for the first. Lucky for me. After several years of ho-hum trips, I hit the motherlode on this one! Herald Petrel was new for me, as was South Polar Skua for the state. But the real show-stopper was the 1st NA record Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel. What a bird! On the ride back in that afternoon, the White-tailed Tropicbird was simply icing on the cake!

Labor Day weekend we took a quick flight down to central Florida. I connected there with two friends and quickly found nine additional birds. Highlights were two Short-tailed Hawks near Venus and a surprise Smooth-billed Ani southeast of Okeechobee. The only disappointment was missing Snail Kite in a sure spot because of a nasty thunderstorm. However the real treat on this trip was seeing Hammerkops in Disney's Animal Kingdom Park. (I didn't count it for the year however).

Then after a few weekend chases to pick up odd birds we had come to this point, sitting forlornly on tunnel island 4. Nothing to add. So we packed it up and headed for Buxton. The only thing open for dinner along the Banks that evening was a Chinese restaurant in a strip mall in Kill Devil Hills. We enjoyed our Christmas dinner there with the locals. Saturday morning I ventured out to Cape Point in hopes of white-winged gulls. The wind was howling out of the north and a driving rain made viewing the huddled gull flocks a chore. The first odd gull turned out to be a California. An exciting bird here, but one I had seen already. Soon I did manage to spot a first-winter Iceland Gull on the back side of a flock sheltering against the dunes. 498! There was still hope. My plans now were to hit the VOA site near Greenville for Short-eared Owl on the way home. I had

(continued on next page)

Carolina Kids' Conservancy



CKC Director Mark Hufford holds Eddie, a blind gunshot Great Horned Owl, who visits schools as an "Animal Ambassador."

The mission of Carolina Kids' Conservancy (CKC) is *"To promote responsible environmental stewardship through environmental education and through conservation and rehabilitation of North and South Carolina's natural resources"*.

CKC educators travel to schools throughout the Carolinas to present education programs with live "Animal Ambassadors". These owls, hawks, falcons, mammals, and reptiles offer alarming object lessons about the way humans can impact their animal neighbors. Each has been crippled by a human-caused hazard—cars, poisons, guns, electric fences, pets, etc. When a child marvels at a red-tailed hawk from five feet away, a bond is formed that can last a lifetime. When the child learns the hawk may never fly again, compassion is aroused. Appropriately nurtured, that compassion can grow into a deep commitment to wildlife conservation.

Many Carolina Bird Club members

know CKC Director and founder Mark Hufford from his work as Education Chair for four years with the Audubon Society in Asheville. Over the last five years, Mark has presented more than 1,500 live bird and animal programs to more than 100,000 children in 300 schools throughout North and South Carolina. CKC, a non-profit organization, currently has about 1,300 members, mostly children between 5 and 13 years old. Each receives the quarterly "Critters" journal that chronicles stewardship projects and presents entertaining and educational puzzles, contests, and stories. The Conservancy's Board of Trustees includes environmental leaders from both North and South Carolina.

"The Kids' Conservancy is not just about educating children," Hufford says. "It's about inspiring them to care enough about wildlife to take positive action." CKC works to create Schoolyard Sanctuaries where students can get to know birds and animals on a daily basis. CKC members are involved in conservation projects throughout the Carolinas and also support wildlife rehabilitation.

CKC members are working with others to preserve habitat for saw-whet owls and flying squirrels in the spruce-fir highlands of North Carolina. Last year a group of CKC's third graders earned more than \$2,100 through a conservation-oriented project they initiated. They donated these funds to help Audubon's Francis Beidler Forest fight the development of a nearby stockcar racetrack.

For more information on Carolina Kids' Conservancy phone 828-894-2161.

Quest (continued)

checked Site A on four different occasions this winter with no luck. So we headed for Site B this time (thanks John Wright). Late that afternoon, just before dark, a lone bird got up and flew in the distance. 499! I could see light at the end of the tunnel now.

Sunday, December 27 was my last birding day of the year. If I couldn't find a bird today it was all over. We decided our best shot would be to try for the longspur at Huntington Beach State Park. A three hour drive down and a hike to the jetty ensued. After several anxious moments around the tidal pond, we spotted a passerine among the shorebird flocks across the water. The scope was set up.....and there it was.....A LAPLAND LONGSPUR!!! High fives, hugs and kisses followed. Achievements were scrawled in the sand and Celia captured the moment on film for posterity. We had done it! 500 in a year! With a big sigh of relief we waltzed back to the truck. Unknown to me, Celia had brought a party with her in anticipation of my success. She broke out the wine and cheese and we toasted my good fortune in the picnic area of the beach parking lot. More happy pictures followed before we enjoyed the leisurely ride home.

Looking back now, I know there were other birds I could have seen. Heck I even missed some embarrassingly easy ones. But almost half the year was gone before this wild idea hit me. I'm sure I would have done things differently had I started the year prepared. But you just do what you can, given the circumstances. So, my goal for this year you ask? I'm keeping it simple....not to see a starling as my first bird. (It was a Cardinal). Mission accomplished!

Check it Out!

Space is still available on Ventures, Inc. trips this spring: **South Florida & Tortugas**--April 17-25. **Snowbird Lodge**, Robbinsville, NC--May 4-6. **Crane Creek, OH**--May 4-6. **Warbler Road, VA**--May 28-30. For a 1999 calendar and more information contact Ventures, Inc., PO Box 1095, Skyland,

NC 28776, phone (828) 859-0382, e-mail: simon@teleplex.net.

Species maps for the **SC Breeding Bird Atlas** are now at the DNR home page: <http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/wild/bbatlas/bba.html>

Arguments in Favor of Options to Sell Tryon Property

Arguments in favor of each option have been prepared by proponents of that option and are set out below. A full history of the Tryon property may be found on the CBC Web site: <http://members.aol.com/cbirdclub>. A brief history was included in the January/February issue of the CBC Newsletter, and a copy may be obtained by contacting the editor.

Option #1

Every year urban sprawl destroys about one million acres of wildlife habitat. At some point each of us must decide which is of greater value—monetary gain from soaring real-estate prices or the sanctity of life. The life now sustained by the natural woods, brush, and streams of the CBC property is neighborhood wildlife—finches, deer, woodpeckers, cardinals, hawks, rabbits, owls, chickadees—quite ordinary lives like yours and mine. If this sanctuary is sold to the highest bidder these lives will end. The ground will be paved over for the likes of fast food restaurants or offices. Urban sprawl will march on unabated.

Mrs. Brown donated her 80 acre property to CBC in 1965, a time when no viable local conservation organization existed to guarantee protection for the land. She did so with the understanding and expectation that the property would remain, in her words, "an island of green." She reaffirmed this by letter shortly before her death about one year ago.

Now both the land and her vision are threatened.

The proposal Pacolet Area Conservancy (PAC) advocates is a "win-win" situation for all:

- CBC continues to honor the wishes of Mrs. Brown.
- CBC earns a substantial and immediate windfall from sale of the land to Mr. Shuford, Mrs. Brown's son.
- The existing wildlife habitat is maintained and improved by CKC's young land stewards. (CKC is described in a side-article in this newsletter.)
- The community, including the neighboring hospital, animal clinic, and farms, benefit from this green buffer against undesirable commercial intrusion. The sanctuary serves as a lasting monument to both CBC and Mrs. Brown.

Under strict terms of a conservation

easement, young CKC volunteers will help maintain the land as a permanent wildlife sanctuary, thereby giving them hands-on involvement in habitat improvement projects. The preserve and its minimal-impact trails will be used for environmental education programs. Pacolet Area Conservancy, an established local non-profit land conservation organization, guarantees to protect the integrity of the conservation easement in perpetuity. The land becomes forever an integral part of the foothills corridor that is the focus of PAC protective easements. No asphalt commercialism. No timbering. But, rather, a rustic place for learning and work by enthusiastic kids—birders and naturalists in-the-making.

Option #2

\$300,000 (estimate of current value of Tryon property) is a lot of money. A lot of money with which to protect birds, with which to protect bird habitat, with which to protect the future of the Carolina Bird Club. We owe ourselves, our children, and our children's children our assets and our best efforts to preserve what we can while we can. I urge you to cast your vote to maximize our investment in the property in Tryon and to leave the Executive Committee with maximum flexibility to use the money in accordance with CBC by-laws.

If we had bought the Tryon property with our own money, we would never dream of selling it for a fraction of its value. Why do so just because the land was given to us? Helen Shuford Brown graciously made the gift without strings attached, except that the property should be used consistently with our by-laws. The history of the land in the last newsletter (and in more detail on the club's web site) shows that after-the-fact attempts were made to add strings to the gift. The club compromised and accepted much less land than originally promised, and we gave up our interest in the house, all so that we could keep a smaller portion of the land (82 acres) without restrictions.

Renewed efforts are being made to add more strings to what's left of the gift.

Why add more restrictions now? The erosion of the gift of the land must stop. And watch. No one will tell you that there is anything special about this land from an environmental standpoint. If we choose to preserve land, let's preserve land that will be beneficial to the birds. I urge you to vote to maximize the value of the land and vote to let the CBC Executive Committee use the money the best way it can. With the money from the sale of the land in hand, the Executive Committee will suddenly find itself the friend of every environmental group in the Carolinas. Let them submit proposals for our money. Let our members over the next few years make suggestions for what to do with a healthy endowment. The birds will win the bidding contest, and so will we!

Option #3

Option #2 argues very persuasively for the sale of the land for the best price. One additional reason for maximizing our investment is the fact that the land is not especially valuable to birds, as knowledgeable birders familiar with the land have stated. Yet we all know that there is vitally critical bird habitat in the Carolinas being destroyed each and every day.

From 1965 to the present, the CBC has spent a total of \$9,940.30 on the property and devoted a great deal of time and energy to the discussions and negotiations surrounding it. Therefore, \$50,000 of the proceeds from the sale of the land should go to the CBC Endowment Fund. Since the CBC is an organization devoted to "the study and observation of wildlife, particularly birds," the rest of the proceeds should go to conservation of critically sensitive habitat for birds in the Carolinas.

This is a wonderful opportunity for CBC members to make both a significant contribution to our club's future and to make a significant contribution to the future of birds in the Carolinas.

Proxy

At its January 31, 1999 meeting, the Executive Committee authorized three options for sale of the CBC property located in Tryon, NC, to be presented to the membership of the Carolina Bird Club at its annual meeting April 24, 1999 during the spring meeting in Charlotte, NC. Voting by a written proxy is permitted by our by-laws for those who will not be able to attend the meeting. *This is the official proxy for use by paid-up Carolina Bird Club members in voting on the issue pertaining to the sale of the Carolina Bird Club property located in Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina, also known as the Robert Lee Shuford, Jr. Memorial Sanctuary. No copies of this Proxy will be accepted. The mailing label must appear on the reverse side of the Proxy. If a replacement copy is obtained from the Headquarters Secretary, it must bear the membership number of the requesting member and signature of the Headquarters Secretary in order for it to be accepted.* The provisions of the by-laws relevant to voting by written proxy are Article III. Members Voting Privileges (1) and (2): "1. On items presented to CBC members for action, one vote may be cast for each paid-up membership in the following categories: a. Individual, b. Family, c. Student, d. Patron, e. Life. 2. Any paid-up member is qualified to vote, and may cast that vote by written proxy. Proxy votes are to be in the hands of the Club Secretary or in the Secretary's absence a designate selected by the presiding officer at the time of balloting. These proxy votes will be counted with the votes cast by the members attending the meeting at which given action is to be taken, provided that a quorum is present."

I/We hereby authorize Kathleen O'Grady, CBC Secretary, or other designate, to cast my/our vote at the annual meeting of the Carolina Bird Club, May 24, 1999, for the option marked below:

- ☐ **Option # 1.** I vote to direct the Executive Committee to sell the land to Mr. Robert Shuford for \$80,000 with a simultaneous conservation easement held by Pacolet Area Conservancy that (1) insures the land will remain "perpetually green" and (2) provides for limited use of the land by Carolina Kids' Conservancy (CKC) for study and rehabilitation of Carolina birds and wildlife.
- ☐ **Option # 2.** I vote to direct the Executive Committee to sell the land for the best price it can obtain and for the money to be used in ways consistent with the by-laws and mission of the Carolina Bird Club.
- ☐ **Option # 3.** I vote to direct the Executive Committee to sell the land for the best price it can obtain, to put \$50,000 of the proceeds into the CBC Endowment Fund to secure the financial future of the Carolina Bird Club, and to contribute the rest of the proceeds to an organization (or organizations) as designated by the CBC executive committee to be used specifically for the conservation of critically sensitive habitat for birds in the Carolinas.

Must be in hands of Headquarters Secretary by April 20. Mail by April 12 to insure timely arrival.

CBC Summer Field Trip

New River **June 5, 1999** **Cost: \$15.00**
Leaders: Will Cook, James Coman & **Limit: 20 participants**
Susan Campbell

Here's a chance to pick up that elusive Golden-winged Warbler you've been hoping for. CBC will sponsor a field trip in the New River area in North Carolina's northern mountains. In addition to searching for Golden-winged Warbler, the group will look for Warbling Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, Willow Flycatcher and other mountain breeding birds.

Will Cook of Chapel Hill, James Coman of Piney Creek (in the New River area) and Susan Campbell of the NC State Museum of Natural Sciences will lead the trip.

The trip will begin early on Saturday, June 5, 1999, in the parking lot of the

Alleghany Inn in Sparta, NC. If there is sufficient interest the trip may be extended to include Sunday morning.

Accommodations: The Alleghany Inn has double rooms available for \$50.09-\$56.63. Call (336) 372-2501.

Registration: Call Will Cook at (919) 967-5446 or e-mail: cwcook@acpub.duke.edu to reserve space and receive latest trip details. Send a check for the registration fee of \$15 per participant to Carolina Bird Club, P.O. Box 29555, Raleigh, NC 27626-0555. Include a note listing participants and requesting registration for the New River Trip.

Nominating Committee Report

Paula Wright, Chairman, Susan Mitchell and Van Atkins, members, of the CBC Nominating Committee submit the following nominees for offices to be filled at the annual business meeting of the Carolina Bird Club, April 24, 1999, at Charlotte, NC:

President: **Len Pardue**, Asheville, NC

Vice-Pres. ENC: **John Wright**, Greenville, NC

Secretary: **Kathleen O'Grady**, Columbia, SC

Treasurer: **Patricia Tyndall**, Wake Forest, NC

Members-at-Large: (SC) **Carroll Richard**, Hampton, SC;
(ENC) **Bob Holmes**, New Bern, NC; (WNC) **JoAnn Martin**, Ellenboro, NC

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Patsy Bailey
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Calvin Baker
Clemmons, NC

Jim Barbee
Boone, NC

Anne Baskett & Bill Hay
Tryon, NC

Paul & Drusilla Beiler
Tryon, NC

Kay & Fletcher Bingham
Augusta GA

Leslie Bland
Columbus, NC

Orval A. Bloom
Tryon, NC

Dorothy Boyd
Tryon, NC

Holland & Carolyn Brady
Tryon, NC

Mary H. Brookhart
Chapel Hill, NC

Allen & Betsy Burdett
Saluda, NC

Albert Cameron &
Judith Morgan, Charlotte, NC

Paul & Ruth Cantrell
Tryon, NC

David Carmichael
Tryon, NC

Susan & Duncan Champman
Tryon, NC

Larry & Jill Chapman
Pisgah Forest, NC

Patricia Collins
Columbus, NC

George & Myra Couch
Tryon, NC

James & Patricia Cowan
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B. H. Cromer
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Ed Crump & Frances Stowe
Hickory, NC

James & Lynn Davis
Forest City, NC

Linda & Lary Davis
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Robert & Iris Dedmond
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Robin Diaz
Key Biscayne, FL

Phyllis & Don Eifert
Tryon, NC

Lyvanne Ellison
Morganton, NC

Lawrence S. Farer
Arden, NC

Addrea Fey &
Brian Ferrand, Flat Rock, NC

Richard F. Fitzpatrick
Augusta, GA

Frances Tompkins Fletcher
Brevard, NC

Ron & Bibi Freer
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Margaret & David Gaffney
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Garland & Frances Goodwin
Columbus, NC

Marion H. Gottfried
Bloomington, IN

Howard & Mary Greene
Tryon, NC

William & Nancy Hague
Columbus, NC

James E. Henderson
Nags Head, NC

Dollie Holbert &
Estelle Howard, Tryon, NC

(See More New Members on
pages 6 and 3)